

NEWPORT SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Special Meeting
July 23, 2018, 5:00 PM

MINUTES

1.0 Opening Items

- 1.1 Call to Order:** School Committee Chairperson David C. Hanos, Jr. called the School Committee meeting to order at 5:00 PM, at Newport Area Career & Technical Center, Room 924, 109 Old Fort Road, Newport, Rhode Island 02840.
- 1.2 Roll Call:** Attendance was as follows: School Committee Members – David C. Hanos, Jr., Raymond E. Gomes, Rebecca Bolan, David R. Carlin III, Sandra J. Flowers, Ph.D., Jo Eva Gaines, and Kathleen Silvia. School Department – Superintendent Colleen Burns Jermain, Assistant Superintendent Kimberly Behan, Ed.D., Director of Student Services Allynn Grantham, Director of Administrative Services Dr. Carlos Colley, RHS Principal Jared Vance, TMS Principal Laurie Sullivan, Pell Principal Traci Westman, IT Director Patrick Kangethe, Legal Counsel Neil P. Galvin.
- 2.0 Public Comment:** None.

Before proceeding with the agenda, Mr. Hanos stated that he conferred with Attorney Galvin regarding an agenda item that he requested in Executive Session. He requested approval of the committee to continue Executive Session Item 6.4 to a later date which has not been determined. Mrs. Bolan made a motion, seconded by Mr. Gomes to continue item 6.4 to a future meeting. The motion passed unanimously (7-0).

3.0 Action Items

3.1 Request for Approval of Deficit Reduction Plan for FY18

Mr. Gomes reported the deficit is approximately \$1,075,000. The total deficit will be identified sometime in September/October after the audit is complete. The fund balance of \$610,000 will be used to offset the deficit. When the audit is complete, the School Committee will communicate with the City to address any additional deficit. Mrs. Gaines made a motion to approve the plan as presented, seconded by Mrs. Silvia. Mr. Gomes stated that communications with City staff have taken place and it is their expectation that the remaining deficit will be addressed at completion of the audit. Mr. Hanos asked Dr. Colley to finalize transportation invoices for FY18.

Mr. Carlin amended the motion to include an apology to the citizens and taxpayers of the City of Newport for the School Department's fiscal irresponsibility. Mrs. Bolan seconded the amendment to the motion, which passed 4-3 with Dr. Flowers, Mrs. Silvia, and Mrs. Gaines opposed.

The amended motion passed 4-3 with Mrs. Silvia, Mrs. Gaines, and Dr. Flowers opposed.

3.2 Request for approval of FY19 Budget

Mr. Gomes presented revenue which is available to the school department for FY 19 in the amount of \$40,494,788. The budget which was adopted approximately one month ago is approximately \$40,900,000 which leaves a gap of approximately \$400,000. A future meeting will be required for the School Committee to adopt a final budget for FY19 once reductions and adjustments have been

identified. Mrs. Gaines made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Bolan to adopt the FY19 budget in the amount of \$40,494,788. Mr. Hanos said that specifics are broad and cuts need to be identified. Discussion followed regarding potential cuts, needs of the district, staffing, and the structural deficit. Superintendent Jermain stated that staffing and programs are being reviewed and building administrators and leaders have already identified potential savings while offering the best educational opportunities. The motion passed (5-2) with Mr. Hanos and Carlin opposed.

3.3 Request for approval of Technology Hardware Purchase

Mrs. Silvia made a motion, seconded by Dr. Flowers, to approve the request for technology purchases, as presented. The motion passed unanimously (7-0). Superintendent Jermain thanked the City Council for their generosity. Mrs. Gaines also requested a formal thank you be sent to the City Council. The Chairman will sign the letter.

3.4 Ratification of Agreement between Newport School Committee and RI Council 94, AFSCME, AFL-CIO Local 841

Mr. Hanos stated that Council 94 agreed to zero percent pay increase with remaining contract language unchanged for FY19. He worked with Mr. Downing on the agreement. Mrs. Gaines made a motion to approve the agreement, seconded by Mrs. Bolan. Mrs. Gaines thanked TAN and Council 94. Dr. Flowers inquired about involvement of the negotiating team. Mr. Hanos explained that Attorney Carroll discussed contracts with Council 94 and TAN representatives and they came to a mutual agreement. Mr. Hanos agreed that it should be moved forward. The motion passed unanimously (7-0).

3.5 Ratification of Agreement between Newport School Committee and Teachers' Association of Newport

Mr. Hanos stated that TAN has also agreed to a zero percent pay increase for FY19 with remaining contract language unchanged. Mrs. Gaines made a motion to approve, seconded by Dr. Flowers. The motion was approved by Dr. Flowers and passed unanimously (7-0).

3.6 Request for Approval of Administrative Salary Structure

Mr. Hanos deferred to the Superintendent. Superintendent Jermain explained the concept of the proposal to align administrator salaries. She recommended discussion in executive session later to take place later this evening. Mr. Hanos deferred to Attorney Galvin to confirm that it is appropriate for Executive Session.

Mr. Carlin stated that it is insensitive to discuss at this time and made a motion to table the item. As a point of order, it is not debatable. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Bolan. The motion failed (2-5) with Mr. Hanos and Mr. Carlin in favor. Superintendent Jermain stated that the proposal is provided as requested in order for the Committee to look at structures going forward and for awareness of statewide salaries for future budgeting.

Mrs. Bolan made a motion to move the discussion into Executive Session. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Gaines and passed (5-2) with Mr. Carlin and Mr. Hanos opposed. Superintendent Jermain commented that all administrator salaries are on the website. Attorney Galvin pointed out that the complete exception must be stated for the record when entering into Executive Session.

3.7 Request for Approval of TMS Principal Contract

Superintendent stated that the salary will be discussed in Executive Session. The Committee was provided the contract in order to review language prior to a vote. Mrs. Gaines made a motion to approve the contract, seconded by Mrs. Bolan. The motion passed unanimously (7-0).

3.8 Request for appointment of RHS Assistant Principal and Approval of Contract

Superintendent Jermain recommended Michael Monahan as Assistant Principal at Rogers High School. Mrs. Gaines made a motion to approve the contract, seconded by Dr. Flowers. Mr. Carlin stated his opposition due to teachers being laid off and discussion of administrator raises. Superintendent Jermain explained the role of Assistant Principal is needed for guidance as well as teaching and learning. During last school year, substitutes and temporary administrators were brought in to assist. The motion passed (6-1) with Mr. Carlin opposed.

3.9 Request for approval to clarify School Committee's expectations regarding the Superintendent's authority

Mr. Hanos explained his agenda item request which is his own iteration of state law and the expectations of the Superintendent. He read a prepared motion stating: "Due to the serious issues that have occurred with the 2018 budget it has become necessary to clarify the expectations of the committee regarding the role and authority of the superintendent".

Mrs. Bolan, seconded by Mr. Carlin, made a motion to approve the proposed document. Discussion followed related to State law and responsibilities of the Superintendent. Community Member, Hank Kniskern spoke of the good work that has been done over the past two years. The strategy has been implemented and autonomy was given to administrators. Now is the time to expand capacity in our schools, and model skills from within this room. Leadership should trust and respect one another and work as a team in an open and respectful way

Mrs. Gaines made a motion to endorse the list provided and hold in abeyance #4 and #11 for further discussion. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Silvia.

Mrs. Bolan withdrew her motion. Mr. Carlin did not withdraw his second to the motion.

Mrs. Gaines made an amended motion to continue this item to the next Regular Meeting on August 14 in light of further discussion needed on #4 (including #1) based on legality, and #11. Mrs. Silvia seconded the amendment. The motion passed (5-2) with Dr. Flowers and Mr. Carlin opposed.

Superintendent Jermain suggested that School Committee policies 1580 and 2110 may conflict with the document presented and asked counsel to review #2 as part of Superintendent rights and responsibilities.

Mr. Hanos called a vote on the main motion, which passed (5-2). Dr. Flowers and Mrs. Silvia were opposed. Superintendent Jermain stated for the record there are items on the list which are against State law.

4.0 Discussion

4.1 Update on grade/class structuring work at TMS

Superintendent Jermain explained that she has had meetings with 15 members of the TMS staff.

District Management Group and Christina Horner from Great Schools Partnership have assisted. Superintendent Jermain asked for clarification from the Committee whether accelerated classes, accelerated opportunities, or both should be offered. The work group does not want to track. She reported that discussion within the group is to offer 4 core content areas; there is time and space in the schedule and different opportunities should be offered to all children. There will be equity for all students that include interventions/ supports or higher level courses. Differentiated instruction has been debated within the work group. The work is not finished and the group feels strongly to keep accelerated math (possibly in all grades).

Lengthy discussion regarding accelerated classes in math and science versus all content areas, student contracts, expectations for behavior, homogeneous versus heterogeneous grouping, interventions and higher level courses.

Mr. Gomes spoke about his request for an update due to the structuring discussion at last month's meeting. The structure and criteria was narrow. Everyone wants the best opportunities for every student; he wants to understand how it is developed and where we are in the process. Mr. Hanos stated his belief is that the Superintendent should continue to work with the group of TMS teachers and let the experts come up with what should be offered and present a plan. Superintendent Jermain summarized the discussion and will move forward with accelerated opportunities, no criteria, compacts, and equity. Ms. Fuerte suggested reaching out to the community. Dr. Walker reiterated that there is no need for criteria; previous year grades should indicate class placement.

An update to parents will be provided in late July. Mrs. Gaines commended the middle school teachers. Ms. Horner stated that rigor should be provided for all students and she does not promote tracking. There has been a lot of collaboration and all are clear on equity.

4.2 Update on location of Administrative Offices

Administration Offices will remain at NACTC. Special Education Offices will move across the hall, leaving two classrooms open. Dr. Colley will vacate his office and move into the Newport Partnership for Families space. Mr. Young will have 3 more classrooms when moves are complete and he is working within those configurations.

4.3 Discussion of communication related to RHS Scheduling Meeting

Mr. Carlin requested this item be pulled from the agenda.

5.0 Consent Agenda

5.1 Personnel Actions:

Mrs. Bolan made a motion to approve Personnel Actions as presented. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Gaines and passed unanimously (7-0). Superintendent Jermain commended and thanked Allynn Grantham, Director of Student Services, for her contributions to the district and wished the best to her and her family.

6.0 Executive Session:

6.1 At 7:25 PM Mrs. Gaines made a motion to recess and convene into Executive Session under jurisdiction of Rhode Island State Law, Chapter 46, 42-46-5 – Exceptions (a)(1) any discussions of the job performance, character, or physical or mental health of a person or persons provided that such

person or persons affected shall have been notified in advance in writing and advised that they may require that the discussion be held at an open meeting; and (a)(2) sessions pertaining to collective bargaining or litigation or work sessions pertaining to collective bargaining or litigation. Mrs. Silvia seconded the motion which passed unanimously (7-0).

6.2 Personnel/Job Performance

6.3 Update on retiree health care

6.4 Investigation

6.5 Adjourn Executive Session

6.5 Vote Regarding Disclosure of Votes and Disposition of Minutes

7.0 Return to Open Session

7.1 Disclosure of Executive Session Votes and Disposition of Minutes

A vote was taken to seal the minutes of the Executive Session (7-0). No other votes were taken.

8.0 Adjournment: Mr. Carlin made a motion, seconded by Dr. Flowers to adjourn the meeting at 9:11 PM. The motion passed unanimously (7-0).

David C. Hanos, Jr.
Chairperson



Colleen Burns Jermain
Clerk